

GRAYS TUITION CENTRE – Online Tutoring

WEEK: 12

Week Beginning: (08/03/2021)

Subject: ENGLISH

Year: 9

Lesson Objective:

- Analysing Non-Fiction texts

Class Worksheets

- Go through Shakespeare questions
- Analyse non-fiction texts and how to find similarities and differences.

Homework Worksheets

- Analyse two non-fiction texts and make notes of differences.

Additional Notes

A day at 'the gulag': what it's like to work at Sports Direct's warehouse

Guardian undercover reporters explore retailer's working practices - from losing wages for being a minute late to body searches and constant fear of being sacked





It may be 5.30am and pitch-black on the outskirts of Shirebrook, Derbyshire - but the roads are busy. A stream of cars, typically packed with eastern Europeans, wind their way along country lanes and deliver about 1,500 people to a massive facility surrounded by farmland.

After stopping in an overflow car park, most shuffle silently across the road and into an illuminated 800,000sq ft structure that seems to emerge out of the darkness like a visitation in some bad science fiction film.

The crowd clutches packed lunches that have been stuffed inside transparent plastic shopping bags, which allow hovering security guards to quickly inspect what is being brought inside. A fingerprint scanner grants access to the building through security barriers, while everybody remains under constant surveillance from cameras. If you are spotted wearing unauthorised clothing, you are immediately pulled aside by the guards.



Revealed: how Sports Direct effectively pays below minimum wage

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These security procedures are not designed to monitor people attempting to gain access to some secret organisation engaged in highly classified work - or even individuals visiting dangerous criminals. This is the routine grind for low-paid staff reporting for work on the nine-hour “day shift” at the warehouse of Sports Direct, the thriving sports retail empire founded and controlled by the billionaire owner of Newcastle United, [Mike](#)

The publicity-shy tycoon and his business have been widely criticised for the conditions at Shirebrook - known locally as “the gulag” - where up to 5,000 staff clock in each day. It is hard to discern why the place is so maligned when you first arrive, but slowly the reason emerges.

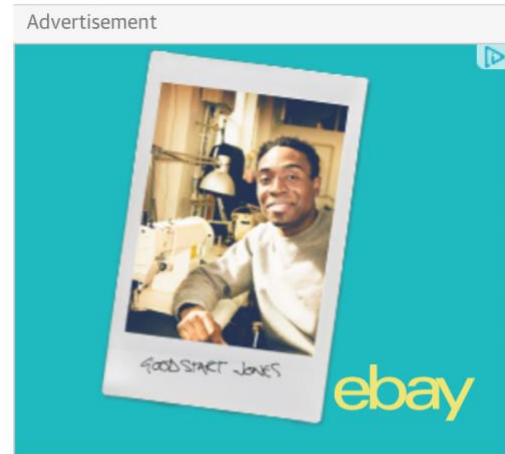
Step by step, minimum-wage workers are informed of what is expected of them for the headline rate of £6.70 an hour (in reality, many receive less) - including being told they will walk almost 20 miles each day inside the warehouse as they pick products off the shelves.

They can occasionally be harangued by name via tannoy if they don't move quickly enough - “please speed up with your order as soon as possible”, the speaker system barks - while “crimes” against the company - called “strikes” and including “errors”, “excessive/long toilet breaks”, “time wasting”, “excessive chatting”, “horseplay”, “wearing branded goods” and “using a mobile phone in the warehouse” - are punished. Six strikes in six months and you're out.



There are other requirements, too. A daily search - part of Sports Direct's zero tolerance of theft - involves workers lining up before being ordered to strip to the final layer above the waist and empty their pockets. They are then asked to roll up their trouser legs to reveal the brands of their socks and expose the band of their underwear. Occasionally workers are hauled into a side room for a more detailed search.

Agency workers are given a list of 802 sports and clothing brands they are prohibited from wearing. They include Sports Direct's own brands such as Dunlop, Slazenger, Karrimor, Sondico and Lonsdale as well as third-party labels including Nike, Adidas and Reebok. Despite these restrictions, the daily searches still take time and it seems to take most workers about 15 minutes to leave the building after their shift has ended. The extra time is unpaid.



Few know details of the working practices at this successful retailer, as executives are extremely loyal to the company's founder and rarely speak publicly. Meanwhile, many agency workers, who have few rights and can be dismissed without notice,



▲ Inside Sports Direct's warehouse in Shirebrook, Derbyshire Photograph: Alamy



seem to exist in constant fear that any indiscretion could cost them their job.

During November, the Guardian placed two undercover reporters inside the Shirebrook warehouse, as well as speaking to scores of current and past Sports Direct workers.

The story that emerged shows **Ashley** refusing to increase productivity by investing in new technology. He believes productivity gains promised by the new technology are non-existent unless you know what products your warehouse will be handling years in advance. Instead, he focuses on building a retail machine whose cogs almost entirely consist of people: cheap people, typically from eastern Europe, who understand little, if any, English. To accommodate them, all signs and announcements inside the building are made in Polish as well as English.

“It’s voodoo retailing,” says one former executive colleague of Ashley’s. “He makes money out of financial engineering. The buying and manufacturing is very simple and done in the dumbest way possible. There is no complexity. Everything is bought as cheaply as possible. There is one warehouse, located in one of the cheapest places in the country, there is no sophisticated computer system. If you go to the Amazon warehouse it is all very automated. At Sports Direct it is very manual.”



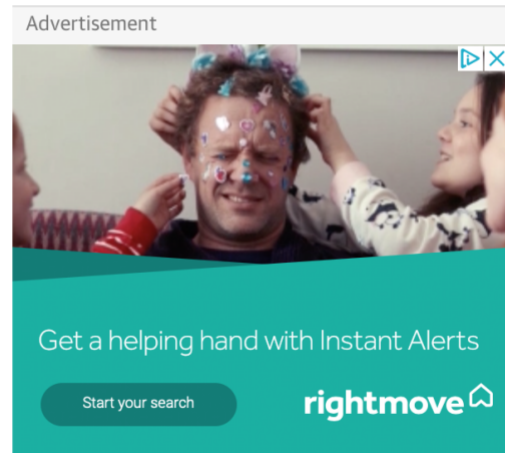
Mike Ashley: the ins and outs of Sports Direct tycoon's empire

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The first thing that strikes you when entering the facility is its sheer scale. The main warehouse is the length of 13 Olympic swimming pools placed end-to-end - about 2,100ft long and 410ft wide. It houses row upon row of goods stacked in cardboard boxes, which in turn are perched on blue and orange metal shelving that rises more than 50ft into the air. There is another floor above.

Next door a second warehouse of a similar size is being constructed, and life in both is relentless: Sports Direct operates its warehouses 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Inside, the workers - about 2,000 on the busiest shifts - buzz around wearing unbranded clothing, safety boots and various colours of high-visibility jackets. If you wear a white jacket, you are a new starter whose main aim is to avoid getting lost and receiving a rollicking. You get a yellow bib once you've earned some stripes, typically after being there about a week; and, most importantly of all, there is a blue jacket for the bosses. "Just do whatever the blue jackets tell you," new recruits are told on their first day.



Source B

This journal article is taken from: *The Link: A Journal for the Servants of Man* issue no. 21 (Saturday, 23 June, 1888). Annie Besant interviewed some employees of Bryant and May and these were her findings.

'White slavery in London'

Bryant and May, now a limited liability company, paid last year a dividend of 23 per cent. to its shareholders; two years ago it paid a dividend of 25 per cent., and the original £5 shares were then quoted for sale at £18 7s. 6d. The highest dividend paid has been 38 per cent.

Let us see how the money is made with which these monstrous dividends are paid. The hour for commencing work is 6.30 in summer and 8 in winter; work concludes at 6 p.m. Half-an-hour is allowed for breakfast and an hour for dinner. This long day of work is performed by young girls, who have to stand the whole of the time. A typical case is that of a girl of 16, a piece-worker; she earns 4s. a week, and lives with a sister, employed by the same firm, who 'earns good money, as much as 8s. or 9s. per week'. Out of the earnings 2s. is paid for the rent of one room; the child lives on only bread-and-butter and tea, alike for breakfast and dinner, but related with dancing eyes that once a month she went to a meal where 'you get coffee, and bread and butter, and jam, and marmalade, and lots of it'; now and then she goes to the Paragon, someone 'stands treat, you know', and that appeared to be the solitary bit of colour in her life. The splendid salary of 4s. is subject to deductions in the shape of fines; if the feet are dirty, or the ground under the bench is left untidy, a fine of 3d. is inflicted; for putting 'burnts' - matches that have caught fire during the work - on the bench 1s. has been forfeited, and one unhappy girl was once fined 2s. 6d for some unknown crime. If a girl leaves four or five matches on her bench when she goes for a fresh 'frame' she is fined 3d., and in some departments a fine of 3d. is inflicted for talking. If a girl is late she is shut out for 'half the day', that is for the morning six hours, and 5d. is deducted out of her day's 8d. One girl was fined 1s. for letting the web twist round a machine in the endeavour to save her fingers from being cut, and was sharply told to take care of the machine, 'never mind your fingers'. Another, who carried out the instructions and lost a finger thereby, was left unsupported while she was helpless. The wage covers the duty of submitting to an occasional blow from a foreman; one, who appears to be a gentleman of variable temper, 'clouts' them 'when he is mad'.

One department of the work consists in taking matches out of a frame and putting them into boxes; about three frames can be done in an hour, and ½d. is paid for each frame emptied; only one frame is given out at a time, and the girls have to run downstairs and upstairs each time to fetch the frame, thus much increasing their fatigue. One of the delights of the frame work is the accidental firing of the matches: when this happens the worker loses the work, and if the frame is injured she is fined or 'sacked'. 5s. a week had been earned at this by one girl I talked to.

Source A:

P:

A:

L:

L:

Source B:

P:

A:

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Homework:

2. You need to refer to **Source A** and **Source B** for this question:

Use details from both sources. Write a summary of the fines and sanctions faced by employees at Sports Direct and Bryant and May.